

P R 021747Z MAR 03
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY ASMARA
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
CIA WASHDC
NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 00185

STATE FOR AF/SPG

E.O. 12958: DECL:03/02/13;
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SU](#) [AL](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: SUDAN'S POSITION ON IRAQ

REF: KHARTOUM 178

CLASSIFIED BY DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION MARGUERITA RAGSDALE.
REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS HAS FORMALLY SPELLED OUT THE GOVERNMENT'S VERY GENERALIZED AND NON-CONFRONTATIONAL POSITION ON IRAQ WHICH PUTS KHARTOUM BEHIND THE UNSC RESOLUTION AND THE WORK OF THE INSPECTORS. THE POSITION IS MARKEDLY DIFFERENT FROM VIEWS EXPRESSED BY SUDAN'S FOREIGN MINISTER DAYS EARLIER AT THE ARAB LEAGUE MINISTERIAL MEETING IN CAIRO. IN THE MEANTIME, PRESIDENT BASHIR DECLINED TO ATTEND THE SHARM AL-SHEIKH SUMMIT IN ORDER TO ADDRESS PRESSING ISSUES AT HOME. LOCAL PUBLIC OPINION APPEARS TO AGREE WITH BASHIR'S CHOICE OF PRIORITIES. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS DIRECTOR FOR THE AMERICAS DEPARTMENT AMBASSADOR MOHAMED AL-AMIN AL-KARIB CONVOKED DCM 03/01 TO CONVEY A PAPER OUTLINING SUDAN'S POSITION ON THE ISSUE OF IRAQ. REFTEL NOTES THE CONCERTED EFFORT OF SUDAN'S FOREIGN MINISTER DR. MUSTAPHA ISMAIL TO REPAIR DAMAGE CAUSED BY HIS REMARKS AT THE ARAB LEAGUE MINISTERIAL IN CAIRO. IN THOSE COMMENTS, ISMAIL CAME OUT AGAINST ARAB STATES ALLOWING BASES AND FACILITIES IN THEIR COUNTRIES TO BE USED IN AN ATTACK AGAINST IRAQ. THE MINISTER'S SUBSEQUENT STATEMENTS INDICATED THAT HE HAD BACKED AWAY FROM THAT POSITION.

¶2. (C) FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF THE POSITION PAPER READ BY AL-KARIB AND HANDED OVER TO DCM AS A NON-PAPER. IT STATES THAT SUDAN'S STANCE ON IRAQ IS BASED ON THE FOLLOWING:

¶A. FIRM COMMITMENT TO THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL AND THE NECESSITY OF FULL COOPERATION BETWEEN IRAQ AND THE INSPECTORS, AS THIS IS ESSENTIAL TO AVOID WAR.

¶B. WEAPONS INSPECTORS ARE THE CONCERNED BODY THAT WILL DECIDE WHETHER IRAQ HAS FULLY COMPLIED WITH SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS;

¶C. IT IS THE HOPE OF SUDAN THAT ALL WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION BE REMOVED FROM IRAQ WITHOUT WAR;

¶D. THIS SUDANESE POSITION WILL BE VOICED OUT IN ALL REGIONAL FORUMS SUCH AS THE ARAB LEAGUE, NAM, AND OIC. AS WELL, SUDAN WILL ABIDE BY THE RESOLUTIONS OF THESE REGIONAL FORUMS ON THE ISSUE;

¶E. IF THERE IS ANY SPECIFIC VIEWPOINT FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES ON THE ISSUE, THE SUDANESE GOVERNMENT WILL BE READY TO HEIR THAT VIEW.

¶3. (C) EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR ASSIM TOLD CHARGE MILLINGTON THAT SUDAN'S FM REVERSED HIS POSITION ON IRAQ "BECAUSE SUDAN IS IRRELEVANT AS FAR AS IRAQ IS CONCERNED" AND BECAUSE THE COUNTRY RISKED LOSING CONSIDERABLE INVESTMENT POTENTIAL FROM GULF STATES SUCH AS KUWAIT, THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES AND SAUDI ARABIA.

THESE COUNTRIES HAD ONLY RECENTLY BEGUN TO INITIATE SERIOUS INVESTMENT OPTIONS HERE SINCE THEIR BREAK WITH SUDAN FOLLOWING THE 1991 GULF WAR.

14. (C) COMMENT: SUDAN'S PRESIDENT OMAR BASHIR DECLINED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ARAB LEAGUE SUMMIT AT SHARM AL-SHEIKH, CITING "INTERNAL ISSUES RELATED TO PEACE AND SECURITY IN SUDAN." FOREIGN MINISTER ISMAIL LED SUDAN'S DELEGATION AND READ A STATEMENT FROM PRESIDENT BASHIR THAT DID NOT GO BEYOND THOSE INNOCUOUS REMARKS QUOTED ABOVE. PUBLIC SENTIMENT IN SUDAN GENERALLY SUPPORTED BASHIR'S DECISION NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ARAB LEAGUE SUMMIT. WHILE THERE IS WIDESPREAD PUBLIC OPPOSITION TO A U.S.-LED ATTACK AGAINST IRAQ, MOST SUDANESE APPEAR TO AGREE WITH BASHIR'S POSITION THAT THERE ARE MORE PRESSING ISSUES THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED AT HOME. END COMMENT.

MILLINGTON